

Headquarters Military Traffic Management Command

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Foot-and-Mouth disease:

Food distribution restored to U.S. military forces

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ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS – Food distribution to American military forces in Europe is back on schedule.

All embargoed Military Traffic Management Command food containers at the port of Rotterdam have been released for delivery to Germany, said Wout Schalk, manager of U.S. Government Cargo, Maersk Sealand.

“Our dispatch depot is planning these movements right now,” said Schalk.

The 40-foot containers will be dispatched by truck beginning tomorrow (March 28) to such MTMC customers as the Army-Air Force Exchange System, Defense Commissary Agency, Troop Issue Subsistence Activity and Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, Europe Region.

Over 50 containers of food bound for U.S. military forces have been embargoed in Rotterdam since they arrived March 21 aboard the *Sealand Performance* – the same day several cases of foot and mouth disease were discovered in The Netherlands.

Dutch customs put a 72-hour embargo on 52 of the containers which contained refrigerated or frozen meat products.

At the same time, Germany closed its border to imported food products as a precaution to the spread of foot and mouth disease to farm animals. That embargo – lifted Tuesday morning (March 27) – was backed up by intensive border controls by police and customs.

Eight containers, with such food products as juices, onion rings and candy were released. These containers were dispatched by truck to Army-Air Force Exchange Service and Defense Commissary Agency facilities in Kaiserslautern, Giessen, Grundstadt and Edingen/Neckarhausen in Germany, said John Slee, chief of documentation for the 838th Transportation Battalion.

“Thanks to the smooth coordination with our Maersk Sealand ocean carrier contractor, we were able to keep the delay of food to a minimum,” said Col. John Brown, commander, of the 598th Transportation Group.

Brown promised fast action on any future embargoes.

“If U.S. Department of Defense cargo is involved, we will react immediately to seek ways of fast delivery,” said Brown.

MTMC, the Department of Defense’s freight shipper, is the prime shipping agent of perishable and nonperishable goods to military commissaries and post exchanges throughout Europe. The hub for those movements is Rotterdam.

The Military Traffic Management Command is also impacted in its shipments of privately owned vehicles of service members. A prime source of the spread of foot and mouth disease is dirt.

MTMC’s prime contractor on the Global POV Contract, American Auto Logistics, Inc., of Monroe, N.Y., has voluntarily been washing vehicles with disinfectant, at the Brandon, United Kingdom, vehicle processing center in reaction to the disease.

“We want to ensure the vehicles do not spread the disease and at the same time we want to meet shipping required delivery dates,” said Sandy Santianna, Customer Service & Logistics Manager.

The Dutch Secretary of Agriculture has restricted movements of cattle, poultry, farm transport vehicles and embryos of cloven-hoofed animals throughout the entire country. More stringent rules apply to exports. No meat and dairy products can be exported. The transportation of milk from farms to dairies is prohibited for 72 hours and visiting farms is strongly discouraged.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Europe has severely restricted training in order to comply with an emergency order from the German Federal Ministry of Defense. The order prohibits field training outside of built-up installations with few exceptions.

(CAPTION☺)

Embargoed food containers that have been released for U.S. military forces in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.